Utah Division of
WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Restoring Bonneville cutthroat trout in Mammoth Creek

Projects will be ongoing until 2020.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is working to preserve native fish species and restore them to historic habitat. The goal of this effort is to prevent the fish from being listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Projects are underway in many parts of the state, and now, the DWR is ready to restore Bonneville cutthroat trout in the upper Mammoth Creek drainage. Biologists have proposed a series of projects that will run through 2020 and include the following measures:

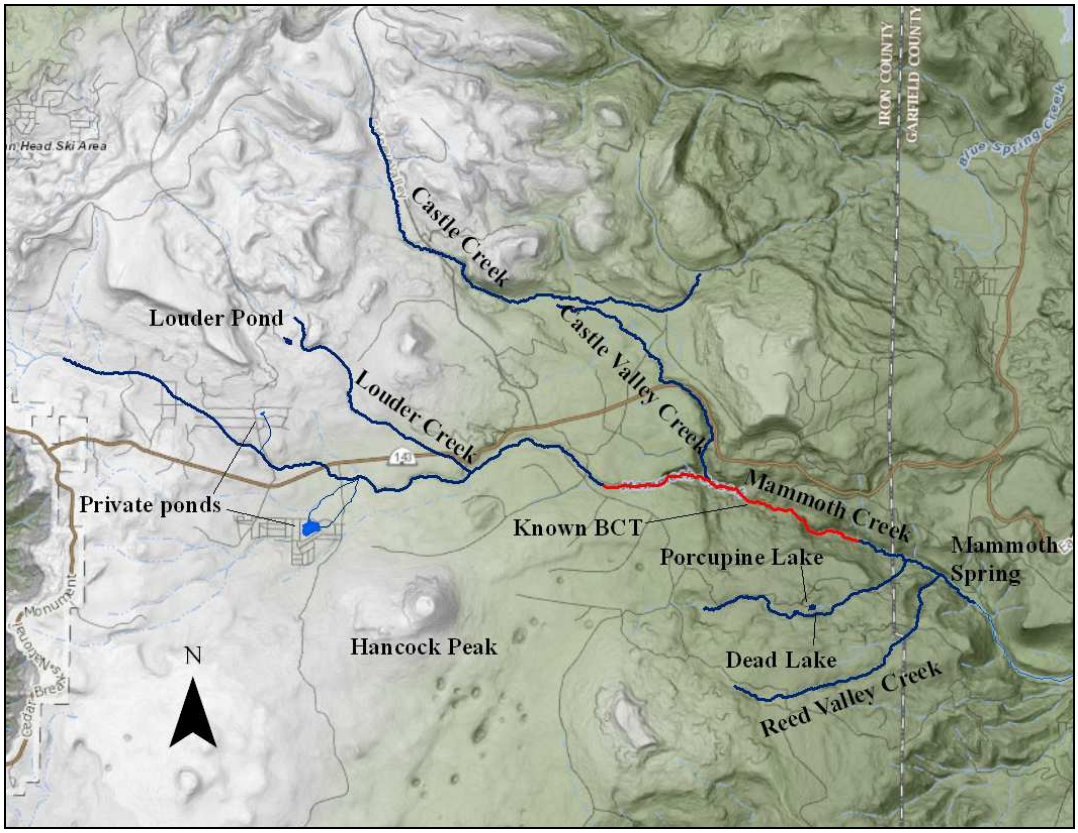
- Removing non-native fish with rotenone, a natural substance that comes from the roots of a tropical plant in the bean family. Rotenone is a piscicide (substance poisonous to fish), but it is not dangerous to people, pets or wildlife.
- Building fish-passage barriers at the downstream end of the target project area to prevent re-invasion by non-native fish.
- Introducing Bonneville cutthroat trout from nearby sources to establish a self-sustaining population.

Why focus on the Mammoth Creek area?

In 2012, the DWR confirmed that cutthroat trout found in Mammoth Creek above Mammoth Spring were Bonneville cutthroat trout. It was the first — and only — such population found in the Upper Sevier River drainage.

Mammoth Creek also contains a dense population of non-native brook trout. The DWR plans to remove the brook trout from the Mammoth Creek drainage above Mammoth Spring. This will occur in the mainstem stream, several tributaries and several lakes (see below for exact locations).

Brook trout removal will occur in the tributaries first, so biologists can move the cutthroats from the mainstem stream before it is treated. After the non-native fish have been removed, a combination of Bonneville cutthroat trout and sterile trout (tiger or brook) will be stocked in the lakes. **This project will not affect Mammoth Creek or its fish populations below Mammoth Spring.**



Bonneville cutthroat trout will be restored in the upper Mammoth Creek drainage.

Which lakes will be treated and what is the timeline?

All lakes will be treated with rotenone during the fall to avoid any impacts on summer fishing. During rotenone application, the chemical is deactivated at the lower end of the target area to avoid killing fish downstream. If a second rotenone treatment is necessary, it will be conducted in early spring so that fish can be stocked for the summer. The DWR's goal is to minimize or eliminate any downtime for anglers. Here is the proposed treatment schedule:

Louder Pond — Anticipated treatments in fall 2015 and spring 2016. After the treatments are complete, the DWR will stock tiger trout, which are sterile. The goal is to maintain quality-size tiger trout at the pond. (It has produced quality-size brook trout in the past.)

Dead Lake — Anticipated treatments in fall 2017 and spring 2018. After the treatments are complete, the DWR will stock catchable-size (10-inch) tiger trout. The goal is to provide ample angling opportunity because this is the most popular fishery in the drainage. Biologists want to try to replicate (as much as possible) the catchable rainbow trout stocking program that has been in place here for many years.

Porcupine Lake — Anticipated treatments in fall 2017 and spring 2018. After the treatments are complete, the DWR will stock sterile brook trout. The management goal is to provide quality-size brook trout and to manage Porcupine differently than Dead Lake (which is right next to it).

What else is important to know about the lake treatments?

The various lakes' harvest limits can be raised before treatment, which will allow the public to catch and use as many fish as possible. In addition to the post-treatment stocking efforts mentioned earlier, the DWR may also periodically transfer Bonneville cutthroat trout from adjacent streams to any of these lakes to enhance fishing opportunities.

Which streams will be treated and what is the timeline?

All streams will be treated twice — one year apart — generally in late summer or fall. As soon as the DWR is confident that all non-native fish have been removed from tributaries, biologists will move as many adult Bonneville cutthroat trout as possible from mainstem Mammoth Creek to the tributaries in order to establish a robust spawning population. This is important because the tributaries will later become the sources for stocking Mammoth Creek. Here's the anticipated treatment schedule:

- 2015 — Louder Creek, Castle Creek
- 2016 — Louder Creek, Castle Creek
- 2017 — Dead Lake tributary, Reed Valley Creek
- 2018 — Dead Lake tributary, Reed Valley Creek
- 2019 — Mammoth Creek
- 2020 — Mammoth Creek

Please keep in mind that Lower Mammoth Creek (below Mammoth Spring) will not be affected by this project. The DWR will continue to manage this section of stream as usual, with the only change being that all fish stocked will be sterile.

What else is important to know about the stream treatments?

One of the DWR's primary goals is to improve fishing opportunities in the streams. Angler interest in stunted brook trout populations has waned in recent years, and these streams receive minimal fishing pressure. The opportunity to catch larger native fish will likely be more valuable to anglers. To date, the few comments received from the public have been supportive of this approach. The DWR may also stock a limited number of tiger trout (sterile) in the streams in order to fill short-term gaps in fishing opportunities while Bonneville cutthroat trout populations establish and expand.

Will there be a slot limit or other special fishing regulations?

Special fishing regulations will NOT be imposed on any of the streams or lakes in the project area.

I have questions and comments – who do I contact?

If you have more questions or would like to provide input on this project, please contact project biologist Mike Hadley at (435)865-6100 or michaelhadley@utah.gov.

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